

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, may turn to the consideration of S. 2776, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, on behalf of the minority leader, we object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank the leader and the assistant majority leader, Senator REID, for attempting to bring forward this Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill. I am disappointed some in this body don't want us to move forward with this vital piece of legislation for the American people.

I invite my colleagues to take a hard look at the bill. It is a good one. It is a bipartisan bill. I invite my colleagues, especially on the Republican side, who objected to bringing this up to take a look at the cost of our inaction and what it will mean for America's school children this year.

As I have said, this is a bipartisan bill. It passed both the subcommittee and the full committee unanimously. One reason for that is the good allocation my subcommittee was provided by our chairman, Senator BYRD, and the ranking Member, Senator STEVENS. Another reason is the bipartisan partnership Senator SPECTER and I have enjoyed for many years. I thank each for their efforts.

Why can't we move forward now? Nothing is happening here. Look at the Senate. Nothing is happening. Nothing is happening, and we want to bring up our education bill to fund America's schools, and the Republicans won't let us. I ask why? Why is there an objection today to bringing up the funding bill for education?

I have heard the President pounding on the podium in cities and towns all across the country saying the U.S. Senate needs to act. I agree. It is time to act. It is time to live up to the promises the President and this Congress made on education. We are ready to act. We didn't object. The Republicans objected to bringing up our education bill.

Not incidentally, it is time to live up to the promise we made on a bipartisan basis to double the funding for the National Institutes of Health. With this bill, we would have completed that 5-year goal. Now that has been put on the back burner. With this bill, we could have completed that 5-year goal. And that is put on the back burner. It is all in jeopardy, as is the promise of the Leave No Child Behind Act.

Last year we came together on a bipartisan basis to demand more of our

public schools. We said the status quo was not good enough; we had to do better. Now, by not acting on this bill, we have passed mandates on our public schools, mandates about leaving no child behind, and now we are not coming forward with the funding to help them.

Now we are going to do a continuing resolution. That is what they tell me. What does passing a long-term continuing resolution mean? I talk about that with my constituents. I talk about a CR, a continuing resolution, and their eyes glaze over. What does that mean?

In real terms, the objection by the minority side today means \$3.2 billion less for education overall for this year, the one we are in now, and \$1.5 billion less for title I, which is most important for implementing Leave No Child Behind.

Since the objection was made on behalf of the minority leader, the Senator from Mississippi, I point out that in Mississippi that would be \$5.3 million less this year for title I if we do not get this bill through.

The ink isn't even dry on the Leave No Child Behind bill and already we are undercutting the schools. I have talked with a lot of my principals in Iowa and they are deeply concerned about what is going to happen when they have to meet their annual yearly progress standards and yet we have not given them the tools by which they can do so. It will be a cruel joke on them to have passed Leave No Child Behind and not pass the funding.

How about special education? A long-term continuing resolution, without this bill, means \$1 billion less for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Again, since this objection was made on behalf of the Senator from Mississippi, I will point out that for Mississippi it means they will get \$10.7 million less this year for special education because the minority leader objected to moving to the education appropriations bill.

It is time we pass the money for special education. Last year Senator HAGEL and I came together on a bipartisan amendment to do it, but the President and the House punted and said no. And they are doing it again.

I say to colleagues, ask your principals and your school boards about their need for special education funding and you will find out how much it is needed. Because this objection was made today, \$1 billion less will be made available to our public schools in America.

For student financial aid—for those going to college—a long-term CR means \$100 less for the maximum Pell grant, and not a single dollar more for student loans and other college aid.

In my own State of Iowa, because of the downturn in the economy, we have seen a 20-percent tuition increase at our public universities. These schools are critical to helping middle-class kids climb the ladder of opportunity.

Yet today the minority leader says no to helping these middle-class kids get a college education.

The world has changed a lot from a year ago. There is no denying that. We have different priorities, as well we should. But if we cannot ensure that every child in America has the best public education, then what kind of a nation are we fighting for?

President Kennedy once said of education:

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

It is the private hopes and the private dreams of the families of these kids in public schools—in elementary school and high school, and now wanting to go to college—it is their private hopes and dreams that are being stunted by the objection by the minority leader today in not going to the education funding bill.

We are here in the Senate. We are not doing a cotton-picking thing. We are just sitting around. Why? Because the minority leader will not let us do anything. They may think it is good politics. Maybe they can go out there and now argue: Well, we can't get anything done in the Senate. We can't get anything done in the Senate. Well, not because of what the Democrats are doing. We want to bring up the education funding bill. It is the minority leader who is objecting. The Republican leader is objecting.

We could bring it up. As I say one more time, this education funding bill passed the subcommittee and the full committee unanimously—unanimously. So for what possible reason would the minority leader object to bringing up the education funding bill when we are not doing anything anyway? It would seem to me we could bring it up, debate it this afternoon, and probably get it passed tomorrow, since it was supported unanimously on both sides of the aisle.

It is time for us to act to get the money out for special education, title I, for elementary and secondary education, help for our middle-class kids going to college. The minority leader today has said no. He said that politics comes first. I think our kids should come first.

Well, they have objected today, Mr. Leader. I will attempt again tomorrow to bring up the education funding bill, and every day that we are here, to bring it up to let the American people know that we, on this side, and I, as chairman of the subcommittee that funds education, want to bring it up. We want to get it through. I am just sorry that the minority leader has objected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

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Mr. BOND. Mr. President, on one point I agree with my colleague from